

This newsletter is designed to facilitate watershed and resource planning, to provide education on the importance and need for natural resource protection, and to bring together local people and partners for successful planning efforts in Illinois. Each edition of Watershed Planning and You explores activities within a different NRCS Field Office District (FOD), but the issues, tools, and strategies discussed here offer guidance to resource professionals and watershed planning groups statewide. This issue highlights efforts in FOD2 in central Illinois.



USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

www.il.nrcs.usda.gov

Volume 3, 2001

Watershed Planning 101

It's no secret that resource planning on a watershed scale is a complicated proposal. All residents, farmers, land users, communities, and businesses have a stake in watershed management. The health of a watershed often directly reflects the social, economic and environmental factors in a community. Watershed planning is also tied directly to complex ecosystem, wildlife, and water quality issues. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has developed a 9-Step Resource Planning Process to give groups a structure to organize, assess, and evaluate issues and options. As we explore each phase of the 9-Step Planning Process in this newsletter, it is important to keep a few basics in mind:

What is a Watershed?

A watershed includes all the area above and below the surface of the landscape that drains into a body of water such as a lake, river, stream, wetland, or even groundwater.

What is Watershed Planning?

Water draining over and through a watershed is affected not only by the geology of the course it takes, but also by the human and natural activities that occur in the defined areas. A

comprehensive planning effort must also consider such environmental concerns as public health protection (drinking water, for instance), critical habitats, biological integrity, land use, and ground and surface waters. Watershed planning must look at the entire range of issues that affect a given watershed and its inhabitants in the short-term and long-term. Planning efforts must recognize that most watersheds face an array of interrelated issues that can be addressed with a holistic approach within the entire drainage area.

Beginning the Planning Process

The process often begins as a grassroots initiative with concerned landowners experiencing resource-related problems. Recognizing that one person's decisions may impact neighboring lands, local landowners come together to make informed decisions. Technical specialists from NRCS and the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) work closely with these private landowners to address these watershed, land use, and conservation issues. Conservation professionals and local stakeholders bring together all groups and individuals with an interest in the process and a stake in the outcome of a local resource planning effort.

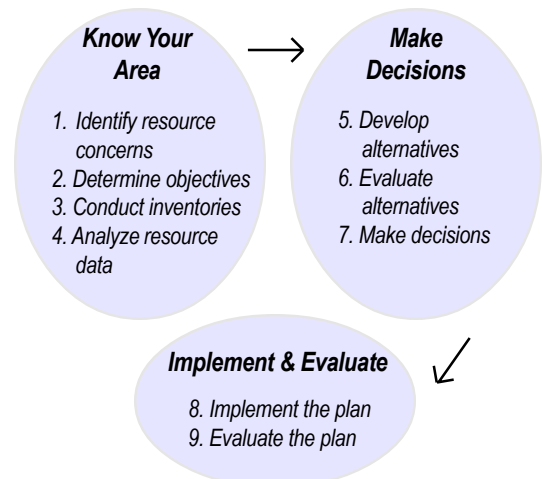
Who Can Help?

For more information on watershed planning, contact your local NRCS/SWCD office. Other agencies who also provide assistance include: Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDA), Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA), and the Farm Service Agency (FSA).

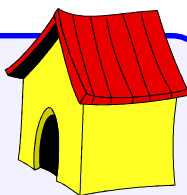
Locally Led Planning Works

Solid watershed planning is happening statewide. In the following pages, you will see examples of local initiatives in different phases of the planning process that are making a difference in resource conservation and improving the quality of life for people across the state.

The 9-Step Resource Planning Process



Notes from the Shed



I have the great opportunity to work for an incredibly diverse range of clients. Whether it is a group of business leaders, a rural committee of farm owners and operators, or a field office staff—everyone I work with lives in a watershed and can benefit a planning effort. Likewise, everyone you are associated with can also benefit a watershed planning effort.

Recent years have seen an increased interest in water quality concerns, wildlife issues, and application of land treatment techniques. The thorough process of resource planning clearly defines these issues and objectives, includes all vested stakeholders, and accurately assesses resources to provide a sure set of alternatives that decision makers can incorporate to support, sustain and ensure the success of watershed improvement efforts.

The following articles showcase the initiatives in FOD2. We hope you gain from the following information and use it to achieve your resource goals.

Crystal Myers
Resource Planning Specialist

A Note from the FOD2 ASTC...

One Factor Distinguishes a Watershed Planning Effort from the Others

Illinois has been a pioneer in the evolution of watershed resource planning processes. The time-tested process used by NRCS has been continually improved using science-based technology and the community-based lessons learned from assisting local watershed groups across the nation. In 1999 this process was summarized in the Illinois NRCS Resource Planning Guidebook. In NRCS Field Operations District 2 (FOD2) covering 24 counties, NRCS is currently assisting 29 active resource planning efforts.

The NRCS planning process, resource concerns, objectives, inventories, resource data, alternatives, etc. are all critical and common elements in NRCS assisted planning efforts. The one factor that separates one watershed planning initiative from all others, however, is *local leadership and ownership*. The most successful, unique and effective efforts to address local resource concerns in a watershed depend on a high level of participation



and dedication from local landowners, businesses and community leaders.

This type of local leadership and ownership in a watershed planning effort was illustrated at the First Annual NRCS Academy Awards in October. The Lake Taylorville Resource Planning Committee was honored with the coveted award for the Best Resource Planning Effort in Illinois. When the Lake Taylorville group was announced the award winner, individuals converged on stage until it overflowed with the many people representing local interests who have dedicated their time and energy to the Lake Taylorville Watershed Resource Planning initiative. Among them were Taylorville Mayor Jim Montgomery, Resource Planning Committee Chairman Gary Spurling, Christian County SWCD Chairman Mark Roth, and many other members of the Resource Planning Committee. Alongside them were resource professionals including NRCS District Conservationist Eric Gerth, former District Conservationist Dale Baumgartner, NRCS Planning Team Leader Bill Lewis, and all the NRCS / SWCD staff from the local, district and state levels who have worked with the group throughout the process and continue to facilitate and provide technical expertise.

It is this type of local leadership and ownership that distinguishes one resource planning effort from the rest. Congratulations!

Steve Masley

NRCS Assistant State Conservationist

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WATERSHED PROFILE: Lake Springfield

Description

The Lake Springfield Watershed covers 265 sq. miles of relatively flat topography in central Illinois. The Lick Creek and Sugar Creek basins drain over 153,000 acres; direct tributaries to the lake account for the remaining drainage in the 170,000-acre watershed. Lake Springfield, a 4,200-acre reservoir completed in 1934 with the construction of Spaulding Dam on Sugar Creek, is the largest municipally owned lake in the state. While the watershed does not include the larger part of the city of Springfield, the lake itself supplies nearly 22 million gallons of drinking water daily to over 150,000 people and also provides condenser cooling water for the city's power plant. Lake Springfield also provides recreation to over 600,000 visitors each year.

Counties

Macoupin
Morgan
Sangamon

Municipalities

Auburn
Chatham
Loami
Springfield
Thayer
Virden
Waverly

Federal Congressional District

18, 20

II Senatorial District

50

II Representative Districts

99, 100

Land Use

- 88% of the watershed (149,600 ac.) is prime farmland
- Areas south and west of Springfield face rapid development

Planning Committee Chair

Richard Lyons

Technical Committee Chair

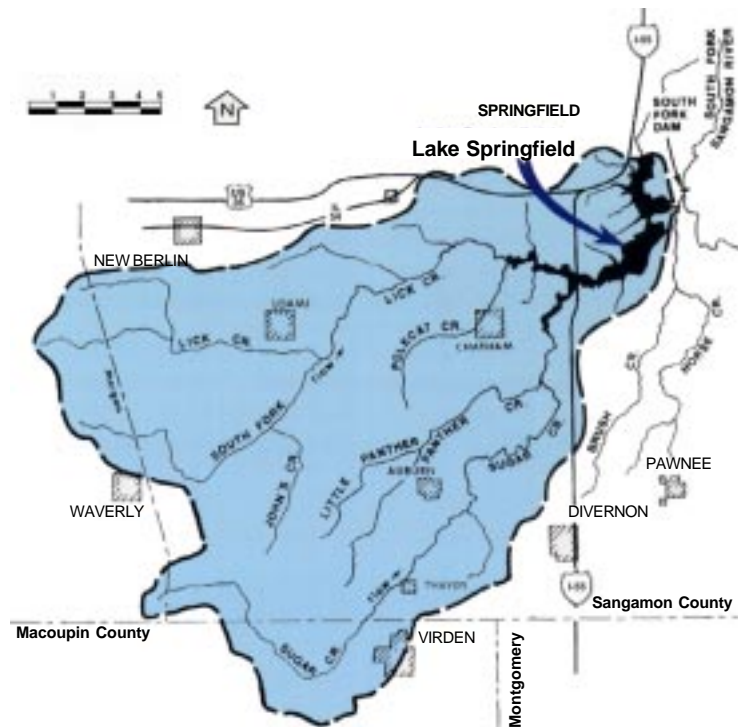
Dr. George Czapar, U of I Extension

Lead County Field Office

Sangamon County NRCS/SWCD Office
Contact: Harold Pyle, District Conservationist
(217) 241-6635 ext. 3

Step in Planning Process

Phase 3, Steps 8 & 9: Implementation & Evaluation



General Resource Concerns

- Soil Erosion: agricultural erosion, shoreline erosion and erosion from construction areas
- Sedimentation: long term average sedimentation in Lake Springfield was approximately 130,00 tons/year as of 1990
- Pesticide/Fertilizer Application and Runoff
- Wildlife Habitat
- Septic Systems
- Land Use Change and Urban Development
- Water Quality including pesticide/fertilizer trapping, sedimentation, and groundwater quality

Accomplishments

- ✓ No-till planting equipment purchased through grants from City Water Light and Power for farmers' use
- ✓ Cost-share money provided to landowners for installation of conservation practices
- ✓ Stabilization of over 13 miles of shoreline
- ✓ Lake sediment removal
- ✓ Workshops, demonstrations and publications on erosion prevention, Best Management Practices (BMPs) for pesticide application/runoff, and conservation land management
- ✓ Grants for Sustainable Ag research, annual tillage surveys, and study of environmental and economical viability of BMPs
- ✓ *Other Local Activities and Accomplishments:* lower property tax assessment on qualifying cropland converted to filter strips; inspection/testing of septic systems around Lake Springfield; environmental walkovers to identify potential water quality hazards conducted on lake leases; regulation and removal of underground petroleum storage tanks; mandated erosion controls for construction sites



NRCS/SWCD

Barbara Mendenhall

As Executive Director of the Sangamon County SWCD, Barbara Mendenhall's goal is to provide the best service and information available on soil and water conservation and natural resources protection to all constituents. With the largest municipally-owned public water supply and the state capital in the District, Barb feels that the Sangamon County SWCD must hold itself to a very high standard and be ready to address many unique requests each day.

Barb began her education on reduced tillage, soil erosion and runoff when she married into a farm family back when the tractors had no cabs and you had a really good day if you planted 40 acres. Barb did not grow up on a farm and recalls that "it was definitely a learning experience for me, and a very trying experience for my family!"

Barb began with the SWCD in 1989, when she was asked to serve as Associate Director. After 4 months with the District, Barb was elected Director of the Sangamon County SWCD, and in 1998, Barb became the District's Executive Director.

Barb has worked closely with diverse groups and partners to address water quality issues in the rural and urban areas of the county. Barb has worked extensively to promote conservation practices and programs to benefit the natural resources in the area, including the Lake Springfield Watershed.

"I feel we have the best conservation programs available to have a positive impact on the water quality of our rivers, streams and lakes," said Barb.



Partnership Champions

Stakeholders

Jon Phillips

As the Chair of the Carlyle Lake Watershed Ecosystem Partnership and a board member of the Fayette County SWCD, Jon Phillips is a stakeholder who certainly keeps busy.

Jon earned a degree in Landscape Architecture from the University of Illinois in 1976, but returned to Vandalia after graduation to farm with his father Don, a retired NRCS Soil Scientist. Jon is a grain farmer who also specializes in custom farm services and contract tree planting mainly for landowners enrolled in conservation programs such as WRP and CRP.

Jon has been with the Carlyle Lake Planning Committee since its formation in 1995, and became the Chairperson in the summer of 2001. He has seen the project through many achievements in education, recreational concerns, water quality issues, and ecosystem management. With a major goal of improving water quality in Carlyle Lake, Jon describes his basic approach as "going for major soil conservation practices" to reduce the sediment and nutrients carried in the water. "Programs are programs," he said, "but people are what make the difference. We can do a lot to clean our waters up," says Jon.

But the activity he takes most pride in is his work planting trees. "I really enjoy planting trees, and it's a good practice," he says. Jon first became involved with reforestation on his own farm when he enrolled 80% of his 360-acre WRP project into trees. "Tree plantings are a great option for highly erodible lands and for the landowner."



Partnership

Michelle Bodamer

Michelle earned a BA in Biology with a focus on marine ecology from Hood College in Frederick, MD and then earned an MS in Environmental Studies, water resources, from Sangamon State University (U of I, Springfield) in 1991. In 1995, Michelle became a Certified Lake Manager.

Michelle is currently City Water, Light and Power's (CWLP) Lake Manager for Lake Springfield and has been with the utility since 1990. She contributes to IEPA's Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program, collecting data twice a month from April to November. Her duties also include active involvement in projects within the Lake Springfield watershed. As a member of the Lake Springfield Watershed Resource Planning Committee, Michelle attends monthly board meetings of the Sangamon County SWCD (SCSWCD) and reports on Lake Springfield issues such as Atrazine levels in the water. In 1995, CWLP and the SCSWCD entered into an agreement to administer an urban erosion control demonstration project in the watershed. Michelle was a leader on this project, which resulted in an on-site urban construction erosion exposition and a video on implementation of Best Management Practices.

"My interest in lakes began during countless summers at my Grandmother's lake house in upstate New York. I knew by the fifth grade that I would someday have a job connected with water."

"My goal is to maintain the integrity of Lake Springfield. I feel that the best way to maintain this integrity is through public knowledge and by encouraging the public to become active participants in lake management."



Calendar of Events

2002



- Jan. 16** *Area Strip Till Seminar: Soil and Water for the Future-Applied Research for Producers.* Lincoln Land Community College, Southern Regional Center, Litchfield. 217-532-3941 (3 CCA credits available)
- Jan. 24** *State Conservation Farm Programs Telenet.* Available in local Extension offices. 9:00-11:00 a.m.
- March 1** *8th Annual Fee Hunting Workshop.* Landowners can generate extra income through leasing hunting rights or starting their own hunting operation. Dickson Mounds Museum near Lewistown. Contact David King at 309-833-4747.

Phase 2: Exploring the Alternatives for Mozier Watershed

The Mozier Watershed Planning Committee has completed a resource plan and is now exploring options for dealing with its primary concerns: flooding and water quality. Mozier Watershed covers 23,000 acres draining into the Mississippi River in northwest Calhoun County. The watershed includes a large number of small streams and 6 major creeks.

Sedimentation from backwaters of the Mississippi River has contributed to extending flooding problems in the small town of Mozier, IL each year. Water quality is also a concern in the watershed not only because of sedimentation, but also because livestock have access to many streams.

To date, local groups are working to secure funds from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to provide cost sharing to help landowners fence livestock out of streams. Meanwhile, the Calhoun County NRCS/SWCD office is working to help landowners install and maintain ponds for use by livestock. NRCS/SWCD is also working with watershed landowners to install upland conservation practices that reduce soil erosion and sedimentation. Improving overgrazed pastureland is also a resource concern the watershed committee is hoping to address.

Efforts by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and the Army Corps of Engineers (COE) are contributing to meeting the water quality and flood control goals of the Planning Committee. Future plans for the COE and IDNR are to clean out approximately 6 miles of a large drainage ditch routing water flow into the Mississippi. COE has already funded two watershed projects to reduce hillside erosion and reduce the amount of sedimentation in Calhoun County.

IDNR has purchased 800 acres to enroll into the Wetland Restoration Program (WRP) with assistance from NRCS/SWCD. This additional acreage will join an existing IDNR reserve area that lies within the Mozier Watershed. These wetland areas not only serve as habitat for wildlife, but also as buffers from the mighty Mississippi and sediment traps for overland flow.

Jacquie Simon
NRCS District Conservationist
Jersey County



Watersheds on the Web

Adopt-a-Watershed: www.adopt-a-watershed.org

Center for Watershed Protection: www.cwp.org

Conservation Technology Information Center (CTIC)
www.ctic.purdue.edu/ctic/ctic.html

Des Plaines Watershed Alliance:
www.desplainswatershed.org/alliance/links.html

DuPage River, Big Rock Creek and Blackberry Creek:
www.theconservationfoundation.org

EPA Surf Your Watershed: www.epa.gov/surf

Fox River Ecosystem Partnership:
www.foxriverecosystem.org

Illinois Watershed Management Clearinghouse:
web.aces.uiuc.edu/watershed

Kishwaukee River Watershed:
www.mcdef.org/kwke.htm

Salt Creek Watershed (COMING SOON):
www.saltcreek.org

Silver Creek Watershed:
www.silvercreekwatershed.com

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service:
www.il.nrcs.usda.gov

Wisconsin-Illinois Upper Des Plaines River Ecosystem Partnership:
homepage.interaccess.com/~niwca/desplaines.htm

The Upper Macoupin Creek Watershed Project

Phase I: Beginning the Planning Process

As the recently formed Upper Macoupin Creek Watershed Planning Committee begins the planning process, stakeholders are being identified and goals discussed.

The Watershed...

The Upper Macoupin Creek watershed encompasses nearly 260,000 acres in Macoupin, Montgomery, Jersey, and Greene Counties in west-central Illinois. The main waterway is Macoupin Creek with its 14 main tributaries. The watershed includes farmland, agri-business, a state park, a coal mine, 26 townships and 14 communities. The Planning Committee is working with representatives from these interests to create a comprehensive plan that meets the needs of all communities, individuals and businesses in the watershed.

Beginning the Planning Process...

Through the proactive collaboration of stakeholders and agency personnel, the Upper Macoupin Creek watershed was determined to be a priority area for addressing water quality problems. Selected as one of two Illinois watersheds to serve as pilot project areas, the Upper Macoupin Creek planning project is sponsored by the SWCD/NRCS partnership and IEPA. The goal is to bring local landowners, farmers, municipal officials, and representatives from local agri-business together to identify concerns and focus on a cooperative approach to develop and implement effective problem solving strategies with a local perspective. Strategies derived from the Upper Macoupin Creek watershed plan will be used as a roadmap for delivery of assistance to watershed landowners in the future.

In August of 2001 local stakeholders came together to form a Planning Committee. The Planning Committee prepared a meeting schedule and formulated a mission statement to guide the group's future activities. The Planning Committee met again in September to establish a Technical Advisory Committee consisting of natural resource professionals and technical specialists who will help conduct resource surveys, analyze data, and formulate alternatives for the planning committee to consider.

Up Next...

Next spring, the Planning Committee expects to use resource inventories completed by local resource and technical specialists to clearly define issues and determine the specific goals and objectives of the planning effort. During the summer months, the Committee will discuss alternative strategies and associated costs.

Mission Statement

"To identify concerns, formulate objectives, and evaluate alternatives aimed at protecting and improving the natural, cultural and economic resources of the Upper Macoupin Creek and its watershed, while maintaining private ownership of property."

Assessing Social Issues: Forming a Planning Committee

Solutions to watershed-based concerns depend on the voluntary cooperation of most landowners in a watershed. Social or motivating factors such as knowledge, experiences, cultural background, peer pressure, production goals, taxes, and government programs influence how a landowner will view natural resource problems, form land management goals and act upon his/her goals and concerns. If landowners are expected to voluntarily implement a watershed plan, the plan must not only address natural resource issues in the watershed but also consider all management issues relevant to the individual. In a watershed approach, it can be overwhelming to uncover the needs and concerns of many individually operating landowners. And once revealed, these issues are often difficult to incorporate with biological and production goals in a resource plan.

Balancing ecological and social goals in a management plan is often a challenge. Involved agencies, non-profit groups and scientists tend to focus on the ecology while citizen participants most often focus on economic and social issues. Additionally, social goals can easily be skewed toward a vocal and active minority since factors such as values, attitudes, motivations and quality of life issues are often less obvious and more difficult to quantify and evaluate. Not recognizing or not knowing how to address overlapping ecological and economic goals and excluding difficult to measure quality of life issues, management decisions sometimes miss the full potential they can achieve.

Many watershed groups struggle with obtaining representative public involvement. Limited involvement restricts the depth of knowledge about all issues – biological, physical and social – in the watershed, and landowners are less likely to "buy into" a plan that they did not help to form. Most planning groups use public meetings as a forum for disseminating information and gathering resident input. These meetings usually attract participants, but often account for a very small percentage of watershed residents. Planning groups should explore the use of other public involvement techniques to reach the majority of landowners in the watershed. Some groups have experienced success with the use of focus groups, watershed surveys and public education efforts.

Conducting a social profile is another efficient way to identify watershed stakeholders and collect data about citizen attitudes, community concerns, land-use trends and economic vitality. Watershed groups can use a social profile to establish goals and objectives, develop the human dimensions section of a management plan and identify barriers associated with adopting the plan. The *Step by Step Guide to Conducting a Social Profile for Watershed Planning* has been developed to assist watershed groups with completing a social profile. The workbook contains: a detailed description of the social profile process, suggested social indicators, data source locations and pre-tested survey questions. The workbook will be available in January 2002. To receive a copy, email Karyn McDermaid at karynk@uiuc.edu.

Karyn McDermaid
Senior Research Specialist

Natural Resources & Environmental Sciences, UIUC

Involving the Public during Plan Implementation

Who Is the Public? In the context of areawide resource planning, the “public” represents all those stakeholders who are not actively involved in the planning project as Planning or Technical Advisory Committee members.

Why Increase Public Involvement during Implementation?

“Plan Implementation” is the time-consuming process of managing natural resources in the best ecological, social, and economic interest of the citizens. Thus, implementation of the plan is contingent on the voluntary participation of all of those in the planning area who individually make decisions about land use change and development and natural resource management on their own farm fields, suburban lawns and developments. Whether these decisions are made in support of the resource plan or not depends on the involvement, awareness and engagement of the public in the planning project.

The initial planning group needs the additional involvement of more and more individuals to actively engage in plan implementation. Even the most motivated Planning Committee cannot sustain itself forever; many Planning Committee members and the people assisting them through the 9-step resource planning process become disillusioned after completing the lengthy task of resource plan development and require additional input from the larger community during implementation. The transition between planning and implementation may be slow and disjointed, thus causing stakeholder skepticism or frustration. To alleviate this, the Planning Committee must continue to be inclusive of others, their ideas and perspectives to maintain a high level of participation and enthusiasm. In addition, good communication with civic or government bodies could encourage those entities to initiate resolution of support, providing more support to the resource planning project.

When to Involve the Public. Building public involvement and support starts with the formation of the Planning Committee and continues throughout planning and implementation.

How to Do It. The same techniques used during development of the resource plan can be used to reach the larger public to promote the planning effort and plan implementation, including:

- Distributing brochures about the area and the project;
- Giving presentations to stakeholder groups such as municipalities, counties, volunteer and civic groups;
- Inviting the public to attend Planning Committee-sponsored presentations, tours, or educational events; and
- Communicating with the media to draw attention to the project, recognize active stakeholders, and distribute information on how to become involved and realize the goals of the plan.

Other strategies to bring the larger public into the implementation phase include reforming the planning committee and adding subcommittees. This may be an opportune time to allow existing members to retire and add new stakeholders with a fresh perspective to the project. An implementation task force or action team working to achieve individual plan objectives may be established to draw more involvement as well.

Simply put, there is no substitute for the energy, commitment and enthusiasm of the larger community devoted to improving their natural resources. Planning Committees must continue to tap into this human resource during the implementation phase of the resource planning process.

*Crystal Myers, NRCS Resource Planning Specialist
and Jody Rendziak, NRCS Community Planner*

The Carlyle Lake Watershed Phase III: Implementing the Watershed Plan

The planning group first came together through the efforts of the Carlyle Lake Association (CLA), a group of residents who were concerned about maintaining Carlyle Lake for recreation and associated economic benefits. The Carlyle Lake Ecosystem Partnership includes a number of stakeholders with a variety of interests within the watershed, which encompasses approximately 1.2 million acres between Carlyle Lake and Lake Shelbyville and includes portions of Bond, Clinton, Effingham, Fayette, Marion, Shelby and Montgomery Counties.

Early in the planning process, the Planning Committee identified four areas of concern: soil erosion, wildlife, recreation, and water management. Key issues of concern were the negative impacts of soil erosion and siltation in Lake Carlyle.

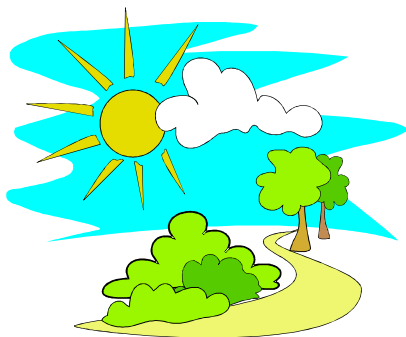
In 1996, IDNR approved the Carlyle Lake Watershed Ecosystem Partnership (CLEP) under the State of Illinois C2000 Ecosystem Partnership Program. Since then, CLEP has received 28 grants through C2000 that help address watershed issues. These grants include: wetland habitat restoration, grassland revitalization, a resource enhancement project, educational fact sheets, and two streambank stabilization projects. The grants are all helping to reduce soil erosion and sedimentation and to improve water quality and wildlife habitat in the Carlyle Lake Watershed.

In the summer of 2000, the Carlyle Lake Planning Committee completed the 100-page Carlyle Lake Watershed Plan after 2 ½ years of data collection, discussion, and evaluations by over 50 people. The plan discusses resource issues and solutions. It is also intended to provide a road map for the Planning Committee to select projects and address watershed issues in the future. Anyone interested in a copy of the that plan can contact the Fayette County SWCD at (618) 283-1095 ext. 3



The Carlyle Lake Sailing Association hosted 70 Y Flyer class boats from around the US at the annual championship regatta in June 2001.

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Highlights:

Profile: The Lake Springfield Watershed

Increase Public Participation in Locally-Led Efforts

The Upper Macoupin Creek Watershed: Beginning the Planning Process



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